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ABSTRACT

A discussion of foreign languages in the elementary school (FLES) begins with a brief history of the program's emergence and status in the United States, a summary of the rationale for early language study, and descriptions of the major FLES program types. An Ohio survey of elementary school foreign language instruction is reported, and the programs of two Ohio cities, Cincinnati and Columbus, are described in some detail, focusing on program emphases, design, and results. General suggestions are made for choosing and implementing FLES programs, and the importance and mechanics of program articulation are discussed. Issues emerging for future planning of FLES programs are noted, including teacher training needs, the need for adequate and appropriate materials, and the importance of collaboration among language teachers at all levels. (MSE)

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Urban FLES Models: Progress and Promise

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As foreign language educators begin to focus on the future, they will need to concentrate on an area that has traditionally been neglected within the profession: that of foreign language in the elementary school. In the heartland of the nation, school districts within the state of Ohio have begun to take serious steps to increase the number and variety of FLES (Foreign Languages in the Elementary School) options for their students. What are the "new" options that exist? Why is the immersion approach getting so much positive attention? What promise does FLES now hold that it could not keep two decades ago?

The purpose of this article is to present an overview of FLES in an attempt to clarify misconceptions. The article also contains a description of the increasing involvement of Ohio districts in FLES—specifically of two urban districts, Cincinnati Public Schools and Columbus Public Schools, and their progress in meeting the challenge of implementing elementary school foreign language programs. The article concludes with a series of implications for future planning which need to be addressed in order to take advantage fully of the new interest in FLES and to ensure success for the many FLES initiatives that are currently underway in the United States.

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A Brief History of FLES

Foreign language instruction in the elementary schools was widely introduced in the United States during the 1950s and became a very popular program option during the 1960s. Early elementary foreign

language programs were based primarily upon one general model, which provided for instruction in the second language for a specified number of minutes during a specified number of days per week. Mostly seen as enrichment activities, these programs were largely considered unsuccessful and died rather early deaths as federal funds dried up and local budgets tightened (Featherstone, 4).

Since the majority of these programs were designed without evaluation components and lacked longitudinal studies (Schinke-Llano, 12), there can only be speculation as to why these programs went so rapidly into extinction. According to Schinke-Llano, the most obvious explanation centers on unrealistic and inappropriate goals and methods for FLES programs, which included too few contact hours, insufficient exposure to the second language, emphasis on language learning rather than language acquisition, and the expectation that children should develop nativelike fluency. A lack of qualified teachers, a shortage of quality instructional materials and a movement to return to "back to the basics" also contributed to the problem (Rhodes and Schreibstein, 11).

Many of the same circumstances that existed in the 1950s relating to the necessity for international communication and understanding to strengthen our country both economically and diplomatically have once again become prevalent. Reports from various commissions have called American incompetence in foreign languages nothing short of scandalous, all recommending more effort in the area of foreign language education (13). With a second wave of interest in and enthusiasm for foreign language study in the United States today, foreign language educators are determined not to make those same mistakes again. Armed with new knowledge about second language acquisition, they now have as options several different, innovative models for elementary school foreign language programs. These are more attuned to realistic goals and newer methodologies that combine research findings with second language acquisition theory.

Rationale for Early Foreign Language Study

While it used to be commonly accepted that children learn second

languages more readily than adolescents or adults, recent research studies have produced conflicting data (Rhodes and Schreibstein, 11). Children seem to have a natural ability to imitate and are often less inhibited than older learners; hence, they seem less afraid to make mistakes, have fewer negative attitudes toward a different language, and develop more authentic pronunciation and intonation patterns than older learners. Schinke-Llano (12) cites several studies that show older learners to have an advantage over younger learners in areas of morphology and syntax, problem solving, and the ability to comprehend the abstractness of language. Older learners also generally have longer attention spans.

Rhodes and Schreibstein (11, pp. 3-4) point out that, while no generalizations can be made, there are key points that favor beginning foreign language instruction at the elementary school level:

1. Early instruction in a second language is similar to early instruction in any skill. The earlier one starts, the more time there is to learn—and it takes a long time to become proficient in a foreign language.
2. Early foreign language instruction gives children a cultural awareness of people from other countries at a time when they are most receptive.
3. Children are excellent mimics. They are curious about new sounds and less self-conscious than adults when it comes to pronouncing strange words. Children usually acquire more accurate pronunciation through early instruction.
4. The early study of foreign language helps children to develop an awareness of their native language and helps their listening and speaking skills.
5. Knowing a foreign language provides increased career opportunities later in life and enables the learner to profit more fully from travel to foreign countries.

Program Types

Although there are many variations on each theme, basically four types of elementary school foreign language programs are currently in operation: FLEX, FLES, intensive FLES, and immersion. They vary, for

the most part, in goals and amount of time spent in learning the language.

The following definitions were taken from a 1986 survey prepared by the Center for Applied Linguistics (Rhodes, 10, pp. 3–7).

> **Type A—Foreign Language Experience (FLEX).** The goals of this program are to get a general exposure to language and culture, learn basic words and phrases, and develop an interest in foreign language for future study. The aim is not fluency, but rather exposure to another language (or languages) and culture.
>
> **Type B—Foreign Language in the Elementary School (FLES).** The goals of this program are to acquire listening and speaking skills, gain an understanding and appreciation of other cultures, and acquire rudimentary reading and writing skills. Lessons in the early grades center on greetings, colors, numbers, food, days of the week, and so on, and conversation focuses on topics children are familiar with, e.g., family, pets, school. The teacher in this type of program may speak some English in the class.
>
> **Type C—Intensive FLES.** The goals of this program are the same as FLES mentioned above, but there is more exposure to the language. This greater exposure includes language classes taught *only* in the foreign language or reinforcing the foreign language in other classes. There is coordination between foreign language teachers and other teachers so that the language and concepts are carried over into the regular classroom.
>
> **Type D—Partial or Total Immersion.** The goals of this program are to be able to communicate in the language almost as well as a native speaker of the same age and acquire an understanding of, and appreciation for, other cultures. At least 50 percent of the school day is taught *in* the foreign language, including such subjects as arithmetic, science, social studies, and language arts.

In their recent survey of public, private, and parochial schools, the Center for Applied Linguistics found that 22 percent of responding elementary schools offered foreign language instruction. Spanish was the most commonly taught language (68 percent), followed by French (41

percent). FLES (45 percent) and FLEX (41 percent) were the most popular program types, with an overwhelming 89 percent of the programs occurring during regular school hours.

State of the State of Ohio FLES Programs

Results of an Ohio Foreign Language Association survey conducted early in 1987 show various similarities to the national survey conducted by the Center for Applied Linguistics (Rhodes, 10, pp. 3–7). An 82 percent response from the 626 public and parochial school districts gives a relatively accurate picture of elementary school foreign language education in Ohio (Andrade, 2). Only forty-six districts (8 percent) currently offer any type of foreign language instruction in kindergarten through grade 6, far below the 22 percent national average as reported by the Center for Applied Linguistics. However, while only 8 percent of Ohio districts offer foreign language programs to elementary school students, their programs include about 15,000 students within nine different languages.

Ninety percent of the schools provide foreign language instruction during regular school hours, with the remaining schools offering an after-school program. About half of the schools (52 percent) have foreign language classes one or two days a week; the other half (48 percent) have them three to five days per week.

From the survey, almost half of the school districts providing foreign language instruction (47 percent) reported using the FLEX model (type A). French and Spanish were the two most commonly explored languages, with a few districts including German, Latin, or Italian. The second most often reported program type was that of FLES (type B). Nineteen districts (41 percent), once again teaching French and Spanish most frequently, use this model to help children acquire listening and speaking skills and limited amounts of reading and writing. One school reported using French within an intensive FLES program (type C). Another district has developed an intensive FLES program in the less commonly taught languages of Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian.

Finally, only two school districts, Cincinnati and Columbus, reported having immersion programs (type D) in place. In both cases,

French and Spanish are the languages of instruction. These programs will be described extensively later in this paper.

Another section of the Ohio survey requested those districts not operating FLES programs to select from a list of reasons why no programs were being offered in their district. The responses were numerous and varied. Some districts questioned the value of foreign language education while others stressed the need to emphasize the "basics." Smaller districts mentioned enrollment as a major factor that limited their involvement in anything but traditional education. Parental apathy, teacher and principal resistance to more "interruptions" in the school day, lack of qualified teachers, and limited space were also reported. By far, however, there were two major obstacles perceived by Ohio districts; namely, time and money.

Years ago when only one FLES model was used in schools, those two concerns would have been insurmountable barriers for all but the largest and wealthiest of districts. Today, however, thanks to the four program models just described, coupled with variations that allow the flexibility to adapt a program to meet the unique needs of any district, those problems are far less threatening and much more easily resolved.

Perhaps the most promising response from the Ohio survey was that when asked if a district would like to receive more information about successful FLES programs in Ohio, nearly 80 percent of the responding districts responded affirmatively.

A Tale of Two Cities

Two Ohio districts, Cincinnati Public Schools and Columbus Public Schools, offer the greatest diversity of programs. As large, urban districts with many similarities, they have been successful in starting and maintaining unique programs with dramatic results.

The Columbus Public Schools are made up of about 68,000 students who, as recently as 1985, had no formal elementary foreign language programs. They now have FLES, FLEX, and total immersion classes in place. The FLES program (type B) is operating within two different schools serving 650 students in kindergarten through grade 6 with Spanish instruction. Both schools serve students four days per week, in thirty- to forty-minute pull-out classes. The same teacher, a

Spanish language specialist, works approximately half-time in each building using both commercially available and self-made materials. The goals for the students are to develop speaking and listening skills in Spanish while also developing cultural awareness.

The FLES offerings are not part of any magnet school plan; rather, they were developed by dedicated principals in an effort to make their conventional schools more attractive and competitive with the magnet offerings. Students are not selected or screened for Spanish. All students in these schools take Spanish classes simply by virtue of being assigned to those schools. Since the schools are only in their second year of the program, there is not yet any evidence of what significance the Spanish classes have had within their total educational program. Schinke-Llano reports that "while the body of research data on FLES programs is not large, empirical evidence suggests that students who participate in FLES programs perform better in the long run on a number of measures than those who do not" (12, p. 23).

The Columbus FLEX program was originally developed in 1979 as part of the middle school design. In its original phase, all eighth-graders who did not take a Level I foreign language course would take the daily Language Survey course, which consisted of one semester of French and one semester of Spanish. The course was redesigned and expanded in 1985 to include exploratory experiences in French, German, Latin, Russian, and Spanish. The intention is to explore words, phrases, general culture, geography, history, and contributions to the American heritage. Teachers are generally certified in one of the foreign languages and receive in-service training to teach the exploratory course. The materials were developed entirely by those who teach the course with the idea in mind that teachers may or may not know the specific language being explored.

The argument has long been that the exploratory course is more appropriate at the sixth-grade level, especially in conjunction with sixth-grade world geography. In 1986, a pilot project to teach the exploratory program at grade 6 was begun in one school. Approximately 240 sixth-graders take a modified version of the FLEX course daily, thirty minutes per day, for one semester exploring French, German, and Spanish, using the same materials developed for the course in general.

Since time was taken from the block of reading and language arts,

the course was originally intended for students at or above reading level who could afford time away from reading; however, pressure became so great from parents, students, and most unbelievably, the sixth-grade teachers, that the entire schedule was modified to include *every* sixth-grader at the school. Opinion surveys completed by parents and students have shown an enthusiastic reception toward the course. The teacher also feels the course is far more successful at grade 6 than at grade 8. There will be a complete report compiled at the end of year two of the pilot in hopes that the course can be moved permanently to grade 6.

Begun in 1987 as a part of an elementary school reorganization plan, French and Spanish total immersion (Type D) elementary schools were two of fifteen new magnet schools created to encourage the return of many who had left the school system under court-ordered desegregation. The plan was developed over a period of approximately two years, following much investigation of existing immersion schools in the United States.

Each language school has its own building exclusively. Other programs are not housed within these buildings; therefore, the environment is one that can totally reflect the second language. To reiterate, an immersion school is one in which the second language is the *medium* of instruction rather than the *object* of instruction (Curtain, 3). Children receive all of their content instruction in the second language. The goals for the program are for the students to develop the abilities to communicate (listen, speak, read, write) in the second language on a level approximately that of a student who is a native speaker of that language. In addition, students will learn all of the elementary subject matter and develop their English competencies as well.

The curriculum is the same for students in this program as it is in all other Columbus Public elementary schools. In the Columbus total immersion model, the program is designed so that during their first two years, in kindergarten and first grade, children are totally immersed, with all classroom conversation, procedures, and subject content instruction in the second language. In this way, children acquire the second language in a natural, low-anxiety way. English reading and language arts are introduced in the second grade for approximately twenty

minutes per day. The percentage of classroom communication and subject content instruction in the English language increases each semester until grade 5, when students receive approximately half of their instruction in English and half in the second language.

Children are not screened for enrollment. They are admitted through a lottery process after having submitted a completed alternative school application. The only criteria for selection are the interest and involvement of the parents and racial balance. Free transportation is provided from any part of the city to the magnet school sites.

Classes are self-contained with one teacher per class. Teachers are elementary-trained and must have native or near-native fluency. Teaching materials and texts in Spanish are widely available in the United States as a result of the tremendous increase in bilingual programs for Hispanic students; materials and texts in French must generally be obtained from Canada or Europe. In some cases, materials must be produced by the teachers themselves. In the opening year for the two schools, there are some 275 students enrolled in immersion education. All indications are that the numbers will climb dramatically in the next few years.

As a follow-through for those students who attend one of the immersion schools, Columbus opened an international studies/foreign language middle school for grades 6, 7, and 8, where plans are being readied to continue immersion teaching in subject content areas in French and Spanish. In addition, students will be permitted to enroll in specially designed foreign language arts courses to continue growth in their immersion language. They may also wish to begin study of yet another foreign language through regular foreign language classes. Additional options include German, Japanese, and Chinese at present; future plans call for an expansion of offerings.

Plans for high school follow-through have been discussed and are under consideration presently within a total high school reorganization package. Initial thoughts are directed toward a series of nonsequential semester courses presented in French and Spanish which deal with a variety of specialized topics and areas of interest. Imagine the excitement of the secondary foreign language teachers who will finally be able to teach special interest courses within their area of expertise!

Because these schools have just begun to operate, there are no data

currently available to determine the effectiveness of the immersion program in Columbus; however, it is anticipated that the same positive results found in other immersion programs will occur within these schools as well. Met (7) states that "the research on this question is both voluminous and unequivocal." These results, from existing immersion programs in Canada and the United States, "have consistently shown that immersion students do as well as, and may even surpass, comparable nonimmersion students on measures of verbal and mathematic skills" (7, p. 312).

In the Cincinnati Public Schools, an emphasis on basic skills along with a strong magnet program brings the goal of quality integrated education closer each year. Cincinnati currently offers FLES in French, German, and Spanish, intensive FLES in Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, and Russian, and immersion in French and Spanish. As in the Columbus program, students in Cincinnati are not screened for enrollment. Parents complete an application and submit it to the magnet program office. Students are accepted first-come, first-served on the basis of racial balance alone. Applications are accepted only in kindergarten or first grade. Those students who can demonstrate language proficiency equal to that of their potential classmates are considered for acceptance after grade 1.

Cincinnati students receive not only structured and sequenced foreign language instruction, but also regular school subjects taught in both languages. In other words, the children learn two languages and use both of those languages to learn new concepts and to practice new skills.

The district employs foreign language specialists who are certified to teach only the foreign language and bilingual elementary teachers who must hold a Standard Ohio Elementary Certificate. Regardless of the language being used or the program model being followed, all foreign language teachers must demonstrate either native or near-native fluency in the foreign language before a contract is offered.

In the immersion model, the children spend half of the day with their English teacher and the other half of the day with the teacher who speaks only the target language. In kindergarten, the second language teacher reinforces and enriches the basic kindergarten curriculum entirely in the immersion language. Through grade 5, students continue to

have two teachers, spending half of their day with each. Time is not "set aside" for the second language; rather, it is an integral part of the daily routine and instruction. While English reading/language arts and mathematics remain in the domain of the English teacher, science, art, music, physical education, and social studies are taught by the foreign language teacher. In some schools, the team consists of two bilingual teachers, one teaching in English and one teaching in the immersion language.

Students in the intensive FLES model also have two teachers. One teacher is responsible for English instruction in reading/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies. Their other teacher, the Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, or Russian specialist, meets the children each day for approximately sixty minutes. During that time, the specialist follows a structured curriculum to develop listening skills first. Children hear commands and respond to them through movement. The teacher also creates an atmosphere in the classroom which fosters communication in the target language. When the children are ready to speak, each does so using language that is both familiar and comfortable. A gradual shift in emphasis toward more reading and writing in the target language begins in grade 4.

The foreign language teacher also instructs children in art, music, and physical education. The teacher follows the approved Cincinnati Public Schools curriculum for each of these areas, but reinforces the skills and concepts with activities specific to the language and culture being taught. For example, the physical education curriculum in kindergarten requires teaching the children to skip. The foreign language teacher includes games or activities common to the target culture which require skipping. The music curriculum at the third-grade level includes teaching of rounds. The foreign language teacher, therefore, includes songs common to the foreign language which children typically sing in a round.

In the third model, the FLES model, children also have two teachers. One teacher provides instruction in the standard curriculum in English. In some schools, this teacher is bilingual and reinforces selected skills and concepts in the target language. The foreign language teacher, typically certified in the area of foreign language, sees the children daily for an average of sixty minutes, during which time a sequenced and

structured curriculum to develop oral proficiency is followed. The foreign language teacher often uses the second language to drill, reinforce, and enrich the specific units in social studies, science, or mathematics curriculum which have been taught by the English teacher. This model is currently offered in French, German, and Spanish.

While scheduling becomes more complex at the middle level, selected science, math, and social studies courses taught in the second language are offered at each grade level. In addition, students may participate in an exchange program during their seventh- or eighth-grade year. Partner schools in the host countries arrange for students to live with families and attend school with their hosts. These three-to-four-week experiences help to transform a "foreign" language into a familiar one. For participating students, the language of the classroom becomes the language of life!

For grades 9 through 12, many magnet school students continue at the International Studies Academy. Classes in ESL are provided to students from over fifteen different countries whose first language is other than English. The World Awareness Program features an emphasis on world literature, experience in a unified approach to mathematics, and a sequential study of natural and social sciences. The International Baccalaureate Program is a system of courses and examinations designed with standards acceptable for admission to universities throughout the world. Students can earn advanced credit up to one year at colleges and universities in Canada and the United States. The focus of the IB Program is on developing the powers of the mind through which students interpret, modify, and enjoy their environment.

Achievement is noteworthy among students in the foreign language magnet program, especially since the only consideration for acceptance into the program is racial balance. Using both national and citywide averages for comparison, each year the achievement of Cincinnati FLES students as measured by the California Achievement Tests is substantially greater than either comparison group.

Opportunity Knocks

Curtain states that immersion programs in the United States began in 1971 and were "established for a variety of reasons, most of which

center on a search for alternative approaches to successful second language teaching for young children" (3, p. 9). Many other programs were established as attractive options for magnet schools. Whatever the reason, foreign language educators have learned to capitalize on this renewed interest in foreign language in the elementary schools with a variety of new program options that combine theoretical premises with research findings. With the success of so many different kinds of elementary school models for foreign language study, it is reasonable to assume that any school can implement a program that matches time, resources, and interest within the community.

Choosing and Implementing Programs

The initial idea of beginning a foreign language program in an elementary school can come from any source but will not enjoy much success until a base of support is established. Questionnaires, informal interviews, petitions, formal presentations, informational booths at shopping malls and school fairs are just a few ways to determine whether or not there is enough support to pursue planning stages.

Once sufficient interest is established and the decision has been made to incorporate some sort of foreign language instruction at the elementary school level, joint involvement of parents, teachers, administrators, and board members is necessary to ensure its success (Rhodes and Schreibstein, 11). The first step is to investigate program options thoroughly and then to decide which goals are those that meet the needs and desires of the school and community as well as matching the resources and commitment of the school board itself and the population to be served. The general goals for language proficiency will dictate the type of program selected. Quite often, steering committees are established to carry out those tasks. Schinke-Llano (12, p. 32) describes the steering committee as having three functions:

1. To become well informed about the nature of early foreign language programs including the advantages and the limitations of each type
2. To serve as an information-gathering body regarding the particular needs and resources of the school district

3. To develop a detailed plan of the proposed program to submit to parents, teachers, and administrators for approval

It is absolutely crucial to plan for plenty of lead time for planning and implementation. As a general rule, the more complex the program, the more time will be needed to formulate and implement plans; however, a minimum of six months is realistic for even the simplest of plans. Program design, even though dictated to a degree by the program goals, will involve many minute but critical decisions. Even selection of the language(s) to be studied can be a very emotional issue to resolve.

A thorough investigation of material and human resources, a detailed estimate of costs, selection of site and participants, recruitment of proper staff, development of curriculum, in-service training for both selected staff and other staff in general, evaluation procedures, and future plans to maintain a well-articulated foreign language program are all steps that cannot be ignored in the planning stages or left to chance once the program is in place. There are always unanticipated problems that arise; stress can run extremely high. Planners need to be aware that stress is also a major factor for an existing FLES program and causes a great deal of fatigue for staff and building administrators who require almost superhuman power and stamina to keep a new program alive, well, and on target.

The most dramatic of all of the new FLES possibilities is immersion education. Immersion may tend to be overlooked because it is a bit frightening to monolingual Americans who find this a radical approach to learning a second language. Immersion programs have now matured in the United States and can no longer be considered experimental in nature. Evaluation data are very impressive (Met, 7, p. 312). Immersion enthusiasts also persuade skeptics by pointing out the cost-effectiveness of the program because it requires no additional staff. Initial start-up costs include only those for curriculum writing in the foreign language and purchase or development of appropriate books and supplementary materials. Anderson and Rhodes state that "the point is that a teacher and new books and materials are provided for every classroom, whether the teaching that goes on there is in English or a second language. Library books for second language students do, however, constitute, a 'new' expense, and collections may need to be acquired gradually, over a

number of years" (1, p. 171, 176). Spanish and French lend themselves particularly well to this model because human and material resources are more readily available than in other languages. Also, Featherstone points out that "early immersion puts an important academic achievement in the reach of children who often fare poorly in school" (4, p. 3). This is not to indicate that immersion programs are without disadvantages, limitations, or problems. Attrition, for example, is of great concern. It is simply meant to encourage planners to consider immersion since the benefits far outweigh the problems.

While historically, FLES programs have thrived in private or prosperous suburban districts, both Columbus and Cincinnati, among many others, have shown that FLES is both a viable and popular alternative for any urban district.

Articulation: Planning for the Future

Met tells us that "if planning for the junior and senior high school level is not an integral part of planning for the elementary level, the articulation will eventually backfire" (6, p. 471). To avoid the dissatisfaction and disillusionment from parents and students that often accompanies planning in a vacuum, each plan should encompass the years of schooling from the program's beginning through high school graduation. Well-informed decision makers will note both current limitations and future possibilities.

Schinke-Llano points out that "the viability and the vitality of early foreign language education in the United States rely on the quality of the programs currently in existence, as well as the future directions of the field" (12, p. 61). The caveat, then, is not simply for the individual school system to think ahead, but for foreign language professionals in general to consider adequate and appropriate language assessment instruments, research on second language acquisition, effectiveness of approaches, a clearinghouse to collect and disseminate information, and public relations efforts (Schinke-Llano, 12).

Articulation, the linking of what has been previously learned to current and future learning, is fundamental to the success or failure of

any program. Both horizontal and vertical articulation should be addressed by program planners, teachers, and building and field administrators who all share some responsibility for promoting articulation.

Teachers in elementary foreign language programs should interact regularly with secondary foreign language teachers so that they all feel they are working together. The feeling that higher-level teachers should dictate what is to be done to lower-level teachers must be avoided at all costs. Cooperative planning, instead, where all are involved in the decision-making process, should be the goal. Such cooperation can be encouraged by insisting that all foreign language teachers attend all district foreign language meetings, in-services and workshops, by keeping informed through newsletters and other memoranda, by keeping accurate records of language skills developed, by planning effectively, and by setting expectations to reach goals.

Teachers on the secondary level should be encouraged to attend sharing sessions and make-and-take workshops along with elementary teachers. They have more to share than they realize! Visitations should be encouraged with classroom coverage provided so that the cross-visits can be accomplished. Curriculum writing can and should involve teachers from both elementary and secondary levels working together in teams.

Student placement and progress should be charted from both ends with input and agreement from all teachers. Slide shows, media presentations, pamphlets, and other public relations tools should be developed by teacher committees representing both levels. Secondary teachers should be invited to help in elementary student recruitment efforts, and vice versa. Joint projects, celebrations, performances and evening programs, fairs, and "immersion days" can combine students from all levels to further enhance the articulation effort.

Other suggestions include having secondary foreign language classes "adopt" an elementary class. Students can trade letters and materials as well as serving as human resources for one another. On a smaller scale, pen pals between schools can be established. Students at a middle school can write "survival" guides for elementary students who will be coming to their school. Cross-visits with students should be encouraged during school hours, too.

Cooperative field trips and travel may not always work out; however,

the idea has merit and should be considered when plausible. Film festivals, guest lecturers, talent shows, student-generated newspapers, radio shows, videos, and interviews should all be investigated. Creativity and vast amounts of energy can be the key, along with one designated person within the school system to coordinate the entire foreign language endeavor.

Implications for Future Planning

In Cincinnati, twelve years of experience and positive community support have allowed this large, urban district to expand and diversify its elementary school offerings. With each step comes a heightened awareness of both immediate and long-term needs of these programs that begin to develop second language proficiency among young children. Realistically, there are a number of considerations for future planning.

Greater attention must be given to teacher training programs. FLES programs require *both* foreign language proficiency *and* skill in teaching regular elementary school curriculum. Current shortages of elementary-certified bilinguals are being filled with varying degrees of success by foreign-trained teachers. (See the article in this issue by Apodaca, et al.)

Teacher shortages exist at the secondary level, too. With more and more immersion students reaching junior and senior high school levels, increased offerings of content courses taught in the foreign language must be included. This will require teachers with content certification who are fluent enough to teach in the foreign language.

Another area of grave concern is that of materials. While U.S. publishers offer a variety of materials appropriate for native speakers of Spanish at the elementary school level, very little is available without some degree of modification for the Spanish-as-a-second-language student. High-interest readers with high-frequency vocabulary would be a great help in elementary schools as well as for the junior high/middle school level. Textbooks and trade books appropriate for junior high and high school students are found in limited supply, if they exist at all.

Although Canada is our main source for French materials, extensive adaptation is necessary in their use south of the Canadian border.

When it comes to Arabic, Chinese, German, Italian, Japanese, Portuguese, or Russian materials for children as second language learners, we are still inventing the wheel. Funding sources must be found for extensive materials development projects.

Finally, but no less important, is the area of collaboration. High school and postsecondary foreign language educators are welcoming elementary colleagues into the ranks. At the same time, FLES professionals are making an effort to communicate with superintendents, content supervisors, principals, librarians, counselors, and other auxiliary personnel. They, too, need more information about the benefits of elementary school foreign language programs.

Conclusion

The rebirth of interest in foreign languages has not happened by chance. Many factors have come together to produce this progress. Astute researchers have provided a clearer understanding of both first and second language acquisition. Creative educators have developed programs in which children can acquire language naturally. Dedicated parents have shown their strong support of early language learning by enrolling their children in FLES programs.

The federal government has reported the critical need for culturally sensitive bilingual Americans to carry the country into the twenty-first century (13) and has cited immersion education as a means of meeting that need (14). Legislators may soon provide districts with increased incentives through the Education for a Competitive America Act. This bill includes, among other things, funds for foreign language teacher awards and model programs at both the elementary and secondary levels (Lehman, 8).

But most of all, it is the children of different races, and from varying socioeconomic groups who have demonstrated that foreign language acquisition enhances overall academic achievement (Rafferty, 9) and that they can spend one half or more of their school day in a language other than English with no detriment to English language development (Genessee, 5).

In Ohio, as across the nation, elementary school foreign language

programs are a sign of progress, and it is the children who hold the promise.

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